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Thesis

SHOULD THE PROTESTANT CHURCH PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS?

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Definitions

In determining the principles according to which a Church should enter politics one must have clearly in mind what place the Church holds in modern American society and what politics includes.

For purposes of discussion we will assume that the Church always represents and is actuated by the spirit of true Christianity. It consists of "the aggregate number of professed followers of Christ who find organized expression in general bodies (the separate Communions) and in local congregations." [1] They are voluntarily banded together to help each other live the Christian life more fully. This involves both the development of their own personalities and the adjustment of their relations with their fellow-men. Any human problem concerns the Church. But its special task is to make moral and religious ideals real. Any community moves on a higher level because of the church in its midst. That church attains and imparts a prophetic insight into life. Its preacher and teachers study spiritually the books of the Bible and of life and give instruction in the moral laws which govern social and industrial relations.[2]

In the average American community the local church has some influence on the political opinion of the voters

[1] Why the Church, published by the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, p. 3.

[2] Abbott, "Christianity and Social Problems," p. 361.

both by direct appeal to individuals who attend the church and among the unchurched by hearsay of the church's attitude, by calling for adherence to a general moral standard and by specific reference to moral issues in political questions. This concerns local affairs and also (if the church is awake) national and world affairs. The denominational and national Church organizations draw up programs of social belief that influence those who read them.

Politics is "the machinery by which the corporate will of the people is expressed in the affairs of government, the administration of public affairs in the interest of the peace, prosperity, and safety of the State."[1] Its earnest leaders are working for the greatest welfare of all. Their task is to make the dreams of the best citizens become operative in the practical everyday affairs of life or, in other words, "to formulate in law and so set in motion the principles which, under the instruction of others, the people have adopted."[2] Editors, teachers, and preachers all have a part in creating public opinion.

Anything which concerns men so vitally as to be the subject of deliberation by legislators or controlled by public officials is in the realm of politics. All of the legitimate activities of politicians can be classified as the working out of human relationships in different groups. In the community and in the nation they are trying to

[1] "Why the Church," p. 93

[2] Abbott, "Christianity and Social Problems," p. 361

improve the relations of men to one another by decreasing economic injustice, social discriminations, and other causes of crime and poverty and by increasing the opportunity of every man to develop his personality by suitable work, recreation and education and by building social cooperation and the machinery of democratic interaction of mind on mind.

In its broader field politics governs the relations of nations to one another. The people of the United States rarely vote on proposed changes directly but usually determine policies by electing legislators according to their avowed position on the most vital issues. So even if the United States is not a real democracy yet, it is important what the people think and will become increasingly important as the machinery for making public opinion felt is sensitized.

Political agencies are to better relations between men and nations. Religious bodies have the same purpose in a more religious phraseology; to Christianize the world, or to better relations between men and nations by making men and nations Christian. So the Church and politics are working toward the same end in different ways; the Church by creating and spiritualizing public opinion; political machinery by formulating laws and institutions governing human actions.

B. Preliminary Statement

The question this paper attempts to answer is: How

can the Protestant Church in this country justify its attempt to influence politics and how can it make its interference more effective?

In Chapter II I have considered the objections that people outside of the Church and inside of the Church are apt to make to the general idea of the Church's participation in politics.

In Chapter III I have worked out the details of what the Church can do in the field of political endeavor. In Chapter IV I have sketched my observations of the interdependence of the State and a social Christianity. Chapter V is a summary of my conclusions.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS

A. The Prophets and Jesus

The Old Testament prophets had a social message and dealt with political situations in their day. In fact they applied religion chiefly to civic affairs and international relations.[1] They insisted on public morality as well as private morality and especially opposed injustice and oppression. Some of the prophets were so tactless that they got killed for it.[2] But we still draw religious ideals from them. They taught that ceremonial religion had little value in itself apart from social injustice.

Among New Testament leaders John the Baptist demanded ethical obedience without a word about the customary ritual of religion. His challenge was to institute a brotherly life and equalize social inequalities. Jesus also was like the prophets in his social emphasis. He was not, however, a social reformer or politician like them but had learned how to live a religious life and taught men to live as children in the presence of their Father. He insisted that the fraternal relation which binds men together must not be ruptured even if we have to forgive and turn the other cheek. The fundamental virtue in the ethics of Jesus was love because love is the society-making quality. Love was a truer guide than rules. This principle

[1] Rauschenbusch, "Christianity and the Social Crisis," p.41

[2] Royden, "Political Christianity," p. 6.

of dynamic love and sympathetic understanding worked to regenerate people with whom Jesus came into contact.[1] Jesus dealt with individual hearts and changed character.[2] His primary object was to develop right motives and emotions in individuals. But he hoped and expected the ideals he set up to permeate society and change it. He expected men to perform public duties and cooperated himself in the maintenance of morality, etc. [3] He urged the fulfillment of obligations to Caesar and accepted Rome's denomination. What he did denounce was the use of violence in government.[4] Jesus did not reverence things as they were but revealed a higher conception of life. He did not discuss the details of social problems of his day but laid down certain inclusive spiritual principles.[5] Jesus put socially useful conduct above mere ceremonialism in religion.

From all this we see that the prophets entered the realm of influencing government without destroying their religious insight and dynamic, and that Jesus though not himself actively engaging in politics, had definite hopes for society and wanted His followers to take part in bettering it.

B. Lessons from the Church through the Ages

We can learn many things from history. In this field history's most important lesson is that of tolerance in

1 Cadoux, "The Early Church and the World," p. 46

2 Inge & Calkins, quoted in "Why the Church," p. 74

3 Cadoux, "The Early Church and the World," p. 48

4 Cadoux, "The Early Church and the World," p. 49

5 Calkins, quoted in "Why the Church," p. 75.

religion. Intolerance narrows and limits the growth of the dominant religion and also of the State concerned. Tolerance furthers the increase of religious insight and makes the state more prosperous because the radical men are the most daring in business as well as in religion. For instance, Holland led the world in trade in the 18th century because she welcomed refugees from other lands.[1] The Church must remember this and never use any political power to discriminate against new or heretical religious doctrines.

The history of revolutions shows the danger of repressing free speech on the subject of changes in government as well as of changes in religion.[2] It is safer and more consistent with democratic principles to allow the expression of divergent views even when extreme than to allow them to gain force and bitterness by underground promotion. The Church must insist on keeping the channels of intercommunication free.

It is hardly necessary to discuss the disastrous results in history of the unyielding control of the State by the Medieval Church. "The exceptional privileges of the Church as a temporal power are no longer tolerated by free peoples. Whatever earthly authority belongs to her has to be won in the loftier regions of moral suasion and assent."[3]

On the other hand, the Church must beware of becoming

[1] From Dr. Sell's lecture

[2] See Drake, "New Morality," Ch. XIV, and Ellwood, "Psychology of Human Society," Ch. VII and VIII.

[3] Cadman, "Christianity and the State," p. 323

so subordinate to the State as to lose its prophetic voice. If the Church is dependent on the State it can no longer serve as the voice of conscience. During the World War most of the churches in all countries became partisan and helped their nation fight other nations contrary to avowed beliefs about the futility and wickedness of war. The Church thereby lost its position of moral leadership.

The Church as an organization cannot dictate to the State or receive orders from the State. However, each will deeply influence the other. A really democratic State will give the Church opportunity to develop to the limit of its possibilities. An efficient Church will turn out a generation of young people social-minded and ready to sacrifice to make democracy a success. See Chapter IV.

C. State's Attitude toward the Church in the U.S.

The men who drew up the Constitution of the U.S. were wise enough to put in a provision for the complete separation of Church and State. This was in reaction to the too close connection of the two in the Old World. In trying to avoid one extreme we have fallen into the other. We have in practice made an artificial separation between secular and religious which is likely to have serious results in our civilization in the future. It is especially apparent in the realm of education. The public schools are so afraid of being sectarian that they avoid all mention of religion which leads to the inference that it is not important or not quite up-to-date. Yet educational leaders admit that

religious education is a vital part of the child's development and patriotic leaders admit that a real democracy can be built only on the virtues of good-will, mutual understanding, and service which are largely the product of religious development.

An indication of the lingering fear that the State will again come under the domination of the Church is seen in the severe criticism by some of our most democratic people of the increasing entrance of the Church into the field of politics. The reason that this fear is ungrounded is that there is no mechanism whereby the voice of the Church can be forced on citizens and that the Protestant Christians who are very desirous of having their Church influence politics for the sake of bettering society are strongly opposed to legislation which gives the Church any special political power beyond that of moral suasion. Every legitimate connection that the Church sustains to the State is one of moral sincerity and religious conviction. Where churches are guaranteed safety from restrictive political measures, these leaders insist that there should be equal laws for all churches.[1]

Is any participation in politics compatible with the conception of separation of Church and State? It seems to me that it is safe to allow the church to arouse the public conscience as long as it has no power to enforce its doctrines without convincing people. The most democratic branches of the Church will help to see that no such power is usurped.

[1] Cadman, "Christianity and the State," p. 323

Further, the Church cannot effectively fulfill its function of arousing a sense of social and political obligation in the people whom it serves without considering political problems. The State needs a religion of democracy, of social idealism, of enthusiasm for humanity to accompany and sustain its achievement of general democracy in all the relations of life.[1] If the political is wholly under the control of the secular without the influence of the religious, self-interest and class interest get control of politics and men lose faith in government and respect for law.[2] Christian principles make for a better State than Machiavellian principles. So the State must withdraw its objections to the Church's general influence in politics. See Chapter III for the details of the amount of participation permissible.

In order to promote peaceful political relations most Christians submit temporarily to the will of the majority even while trying to build up public opinion to get more progressive legislation. Christians must never lose sight of their ideals.[3] Their loyalty to the Church or obedience to conscience will usually not conflict seriously with the requirements of citizenship in the State. Where there is an irreconcible conflict as for instance in the case of the conscientious objector to war, the Christian

[1] Ellwood, "Reconstruction of Religion," p. 259

[2] Ellwood, "Reconstruction of Religion," p. 244

[3] Brown, "The Church in America," pp. 162 ff.

must be true to his ideals but must not deny the State the right to punish him because it is a time of crisis.

D. Effect of Political Interest in Religion

Some people object that political interest is harmful to religious life; that personal piety is lessened by activity in distinctly secular pursuits. This is not true if he uses the same high idealism in his human relationships that he achieves in his relations to God. It works both ways. Individual piety cannot be achieved without a social conscience, and personal holiness is an absolutely necessary preliminary to all effective social service.[1] A person is not well balanced unless he has developed both his religious life and his social life.

There is also no conflict between holiness and service in a church.[2] In undertaking social reconstruction a church would lose prestige and wealth but it would gain earnestness and grow more nearly into the real spirit of Christ. It would make up in sincerity any elegance it lost. The Church loses respect by keeping still on vital subjects.[3] "Should the churches undertake to restore to decent and righteous behavior the states they largely created, Protestantism will, in my judgment, enter upon an era of vigorous health which it has never yet known. As things are, it must follow the restorative policy, cost what it may, or lose its moral control over society."[4] A

[1] Adam, quoted in "Why the Church," p. 74

[2] "Why the Church, p. 70-72, and Faunce, "New Horizon of State and Church," p. 43.

[3] "The Army and Religion," quoted in "Why the Church," p. 77.

[4] Cadman, "Christianity and the State," p. 327.

common attack on social evils with the consequent hardships and criticisms would unite the Christian bodies in a more splendid unity than ever before.

"If any one holds that religion is essentially ritual and sacramental, or that it is purely personal; ... or that social interest is likely to lead preachers astray; he must prove his case with his eyes on the Hebrew prophets, and the burden of proof is with him."[1] The ceremonial in religion tends to be opposed to a social gospel. But there is a type of worship which is not a sedative. It is the kind that uses the whole mind and realizes social problems while men are seeking for God.

E. Christianity and Social Reconstruction

To save the world both the individual and society must be saved. They are interacting forces.[2] A perfect society cannot be based on indifferent and selfish persons. Christians cannot grow beautiful, consistent characters in a society organized around profit and class interest. It has always been admitted that the Church should minister to individual souls but now it must take up the challenge of reconstructing society. Sacrificial love enjoins the Church to assume a dynamic moral and spiritual leadership,[3] and become the champion of large, constructive social ideals. The Church has a right to be concerned with justice to all men in every walk of life. Christianity is an interpretation and application of spiritual principles in politics

[1] Rauschenbusch, "Christianity and the Social Crisis," p. 41

[2] Ward, quoted in "Why the Church," p. 70-72.

[3] Scudder, "The Church and the Hour, p. 39.

as well as in the rest of life. "Every political question is rapidly becoming a social question and every social question is a religious question.[1]

In pursuance of the conviction that the Christian Way of Life is ideal both for individuals and society,[5] sincere Church members are emphasizing and demanding the application to all human relationships of those revolutionary principles which Jesus set forth (See Ch. III A and B) and which their own experience and insight confirm as true. For example, brotherliness and mutual service and consideration for the worth of human personality should characterize industrial and international relations as well as matters of adjustment between single persons.

The Church must resist the side-tracing of Jesus of Nazareth in the most vital concerns of humanity. "If his teaching does not apply to groups as well as to single persons, it is of slight significance."[3] The working out of human relationships in different groups is the task of modern political agencies. The contribution of Christianity is the great principle of universal love as a positive force in the accomplishment of this task. A church makes a unique contribution to political problems by its consecrated and impartial attitude.[4] It is willing to sacrifice and it can speak to all classes.

1 Mazzini, quoted in Abbott, "Christianity and Social Problems", p. 360.

2 "Why the Church," Ch. V and IX

3 Faunce, "New Horizon of State and Church, " p. 82.

4 Douglass, quoted in "Why the Church," p. 44.

So the Church must boldly lead in social reconstruction, feeling responsible for community affairs, holding up the ideal, investigating causes, inciting capable individuals and agencies to greater zeal, cooperating, challenging, demanding, rousing the national conscience, and entering directly into the field of international politics.[1] "How else can morals and religion come to dominate our modern complex social life?"[2]

"An efficient modern religion must have a positive and unequivocal doctrine concerning political relations.[3]

[1] Cunningham, "Christianity and Politics," p. 1

[2] Diffendorfer, quoted in "Why the Church," p. 79

[3] Ellwood, p. 243

CHAPTER III

EXTENT OF THE CHURCH'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

A. Setting forth General Principles

The Church is in almost all quarters accorded the right to set forth the spiritual principles of Christianity and show that they should be applied in the relationships of individuals. It is expected to urge its members and all hearers to be loving and conscientious in their homes and even in business and social relations where possible. A minister is not seriously questioned when he reminds people that they have duties as citizens. But when he tells his followers to test their political thinking by Christian standards, some objection is heard. How far should a church go in taking part in politics? Should it insist on applying the principles of Christianity to general social problems, to specific social problems? Should a minister suggest that a certain reform ought to be considered in the light of Jesus' teachings? Can he even brand a particular measure before the legislature as inconsistent with our professions of belief?

To begin with the least debatable province of the church, let us first consider the duty of the church in keeping alive its ideals. The central principles of Christianity are neighborliness, service, and mutual respect for the worth of human personality. The Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man which Jesus taught

imply equality of rights and opportunities for all men. The church may interpret these principles in relation to individual conduct. It may even express its conviction that the laws of personality, brotherhood, and service are applicable to the larger group relations. The Church must get people in the habit of thinking in terms of Christian idealism about social problems.

The Church should study spiritually the Bible and life for insight into their moral laws applicable to social and political life, thus furnishing prophetic insight into life.[1] In this holding up of ideals and in furthering the worship of a socially-interested God, the Church produces the dynamic for an experiment in applying Christianity to society.[2] See Chapter IV for a description of the way in which the Church helps the State increase its democracy.

In chiefly interpreting general principles the Church is only following the example of the Founder of Christianity who did not discuss the details of social problems of his day but laid down certain inclusive spiritual principles.[3] One of the most radically significant of Jesus' teachings when viewed in its historical background is this:- Render unto God what belongs to Him in distinction from what belongs to Caesar. In other words, the State is not everything;

[1] Abbott, "Christianity and Social Problems," p. 361.

[2] Scudder quoted in "Why the Church," p. 42.

[3] Calkins quoted in "Why the Church," p. 43.

man is before and higher than the citizen. "This idea is the birthplace of civil and religious liberty." [1] The same emphasis on the worth of human personality in itself is found elsewhere in Jesus' teachings.

Jesus' primary object was to develop right motives and emotions in individuals.[2] "This method of inwardness is unique in Christianity." [3] The Church has a unique power and duty to stir individual consciences.[4] The Church brings to people in the most intense way the social values of good-will, social intelligence, and personal character which are at the basis of a real democratic society. The Church's primary responsibility is to preach the Christian ideal and to inspire the men and women who in their several walks of life and through different institutions of society will make this idea prevail.[5] Dean Inge is right in asserting that changing institutions without changing character will not be of permanent benefit. He also observes that if we make men and women good, they will either make their institutions work or alter them.[6] I agree that making men and women good is the first and most important requisite. But the good must not only include personal piety but also social righteousness. So a church member should be made to feel that his social ideals are an

1 Gell, p. 3, 4.
2 Kent, p. 295
3 Inge quoted in "Why the Church," p. p. 74.
4 Case and Cunningham
5 Brown, p. 6
6 Inge in "Why the Church," p. 74

important part in his professed Christianity.[1] A church should check up once in a while to see whether its members are growing in their attitudes toward other peoples and other classes. Church membership should mean a higher plane of action. Members should turn to the church for guidance as to the Christian standards involved in business, strike, or war.[2] Christian ideals are just as praiseworthy and necessary in social programs as in individual lives.[3] The Church realizes that it is difficult for a man to be Christian in a pagan society[3] and so is interested in getting society organized on a moral basis so that individuals can be moral.[4] In the necessary reformation of society the Church may play an important part. Some people believe that the Church as an organized body should itself undertake social reconstruction. It will at least help to bring about the real democracy by inculcating certain attitudes.

B. Inculcating Attitudes

What are the most important attitudes which a democratic church must inculcate in its people? Everyone admits that the moral integrity of the people is the bulwark of any nation. See top of p. 9. To bring society into accord with Jesus' principles as discussed on pp. 5 and 15, the church must next insist that the worker and even the work is less

1 "Why the Church", Ch. VIII

2 "Why the Church", Ch. VI

3 Fosdick See footnote 21 page 24.

4 Ellwood

important than the person underneath. If firmly believed by all the best citizens, this attitude would certainly influence industrial legislation and the conducting of business. The Church also stands for equality of opportunity and justice for men of all classes and races because God is the common Father of all and loves them all. Jesus taught the equality of worth of all human personality and those of modern Christians who are trying to follow Jesus' teachings most closely have challenged the Church to try to spread this attitude among all Christians and others who are touched by the program of the Church. Another attitude to be carefully cultivated by the Church is the feeling of social obligation, a willingness to consider the rights of others and sacrifice convenience and even profit for the sake of the success of the common experiment in democracy. Religion can furnish the motivation for a conscientious discharge of the duties of citizenship. It should be a part of a man's or woman's Christianity to inform himself on current social conditions and political issues and work for the accomplishment of the policy which he believes most nearly accords with his ideals.

The Church has a unique opportunity especially in its religious education work, to train young people in ethical discrimination on political issues.[1] Probably secular training for citizenship is not actuated by Christian ideals. Then she must emphasize the importance

[1] Case, p. 48, 49

of sympathy and tolerance in social and political relations between classes and nations. This involves an attitude of expecting and looking for the good in other people and allowing radical minorities to explain their position. Free intercommunication increases social solidarity. Effective national, inter-racial, and international federation of religious bodies to work out the mind of the Church will provide demonstration and practice in real democratic procedure. The missionary education of the average church affords a wonderful opportunity to promote international understanding. "There can be no moral or spiritual growth in nations till the causes of war are abolished by a united Christian consciousness."[1] Moral principles should be binding between nations as well as between individuals.[2] A church must make it clearly felt among its members that present distrust and heavy armaments between nations is not consistent with the Christian ideal for the world.

This is really definitely applying the fundamental Christian principles to social and political behavior as individual Christians. Of course it is the church as an organization which promotes these attitudes and habits. So in one sense the teaching work of the church is active participation in reconstructing society.

C. <u>Supporting or Denouncing Specific Measures</u>

In making these Christian attitudes specific and detailed the Church should take pains to act in accordance

[1] Cadman, "Christianity and the State," p. 321

[2] Elwood, "Reconstruction of Religion," p. 245.

with sound sociological principles. In other words it must be governed by its head as well as its heart. In this way it will preserve its equilibrium in the midst of the complexity of modern problems which it must meet. To begin with the negative principles, the church should not support an untried, uncertain program of social revolution. We have no assurance that a change in institutions will bring about permanent improvement. On the contrary, no movement will succeed unless it has the hearty, self-sacrificing support of nearly all the people engaged in it.

As the Church should not ally itself with revolutionary forces, neither is alliance with conservatism in accordance with the spirit of Christ, for the latter allows for no progress toward the Christian ideal for society. Some churches are without protest supported by men who are daily exploiting their brothers.[1] The church should never be an autocracy fighting for the status quo or for the benefit of any one class "without vision and without passion for social justice."[2]

Another thing which the church should not do is to burden itself with many activities which are now largely in the hands of secular agencies. "A secularized Christianity would serve neither God nor man. ... But a church determined to combat spiritual evil with spiritual weapons and get civilization to adopt Christianity might solve all of our greatest problems."[3] The Church has a right

[1] Vedder, "Gospel of Jesus and the Problem of Democracy," p. 46

[2] Sherwood Eddy quoted in Case "Liberal Christianity and Religious Education," p. 46

[3] Inge, "Outspoken Essays," p. 146.

to be striving to Christianize the world but anything that is solely for the advantage of the Church and does not increase the welfare of society as a whole should not be urged on Christian citizens. The Church should not stoop to oppose or support a candidate for personal reasons. The sole criterion of his election is fitness for the office. The Church should not dominate any political situation just for the sake of gathering power to itself. Of course no church should deny to any other the right to the same use of political influence that she herself practices. She should never try to put over any legislation discriminating against any other sect or religion or lack of religion.[1] A church has a right and duty to enter politics to destroy a public evil, to defend an organized public good, or to support a great cause of human enlightenment.[2]

A church can legitimately try to improve the community by getting a law passed or not passed. But she must remember that prohibitive legislation is an ineffective instrument for bettering society.[3] A law is an expression of progress and a means of educating the public in the worth of the ideal.[4] But sincere public conviction in support of the measure will insure its enforcement with or without law. Often the church could render political action unnecessary by offering some constructive substitute. For

1 From Dr. Sell's lecture

2 From Dr. Holmes' sermon

3 Lippman, "Preface to Politics," p. 39.

4 Brown, "The Church in America," p. 162

example, some criminal activity might be decidedly lessened by stimulating establishment of wholesome recreational facilities or by otherwise removing the cause. The Church itself should undertake the remedying of any lack of spiritual nurture among any group of people. The renewal of social values by religion is much more important than legislation.

Where many great thinkers agree that a step in advance will improve the condition of many without endangering social stability, the Church is justified in lending its official approval to trying the experiment. The Church, for example, should encourage Christian democratic methods of settling industrial differences.

We must more than train leaders and create an atmosphere; we must actively lead in social reform.[1] The Church must at least arouse the public conscience by denouncing evils in the social order; such as economic exploitation, poverty, curtailing of freedom of speech, war, spirit of materialism. The Church cannot be consistent and be satisfied with what is. It must constantly hold aloft the higher possibilities and call on the secular agencies to improve conditions. It is vanity to "talk of redeeming personality while one is careless of the social environment which ruins personality; to talk of building Christ-like character while one is complacent about an economic system that is definitely organized about the

[1] Vedder, "Gospel of Jesus and the Problems of Democracy," p. 35

idea of selfish profit; to praise Christian ideals while one is blind to the inevitable urgency with which they insist on getting themselves expressed in social programs."[1] So the Church should promote specific social programs.

Christianity must from its inherent nature oppose the idea that the ultimate solution of national problems is to be found in brute force. A Christian nation must be diligently seeking for a better way.[2] Christianity can be applied to national conduct.[3] Cooperation of nations is possible.[4] "The churches should require the political authorities of their respective nations to define and codify international law, and by its means make covenants which substitute arbitration for combat in the disputes of Christian nations."[5]

I have maintained that a church has a right to be an active agent in social reform and even to try to get a law passed if it is for the best interests of all. The next question is: What methods are legitimate? It seems obvious that a church harms no one in forming public opinion on political issues involving moral questions. The more general interpretation of Christian principles is without value unless the attitudes and ideals invoked are applied to social and political problems. The church may be mistaken in its application but it is better to be wrong

[1] Fosdick quoted in Case, "Liberal Christianity and Religious Education," p. 115

[2] Faunce, "The New Horizon of State and Church," p. 66

[3] Fosdick quoted in Case, "Liberal Christianity and Religious Education," p. 115

[4] Faunce, "New Horizon of State and Church," p. 89

[5] Cadman, Christianity and the State, p. 327

than not to have tried.[1] Church members may differ in applying Christian principles. The best mind of the church can be determined by democratic discussion. Church leaders do not, of course, all have time or intelligence to form correct judgments on political issues. The remedy is for them to cooperate with each other and with other agencies in collecting information and for them not to be dogmatic but present the various views on any subject. An unintelligent and ill-considered discussion of big contemporary issues certainly is not helpful and may be harmful.[2] The conclusive argument is that no other agency has for a chief function to emphasize the ethical issues involved. If people do not get Christian interpretation of political questions in the church, where will they get it? A church is more apt to be impartial and idealistic in its judgment. Dean Inge objects that "the church has its own work to do without trying to enlighten political experts on their own subjects."[3] But in forming public opinion the church is only trying to inform the mass of citizens and draw their attention to an aspect which perhaps had been forgotten. Meanwhile the church must not neglect its more important duties.

Perhaps a church would be wise to discuss political issues only before definite opinions are formed, In this

[1] Royden, "Political Christianity," p. 14

[2] Why the Church, p. 39

[3] Inge

way more influence will be possible and less antagonism will be aroused. For when men have made up their minds on a subject or a candidate, the emotionalize their decision so that it becomes a part of them, and whoever disagrees affronts them. But at an earlier stage opinions are more fluid and men can really be expected to listen to rational arguments and weigh the matter without bias. Set up principles and applications of Christian teaching far in advance of the crisis of the issue and then keep still when emotions are high.

Should a minister preach on political questions? Of course no one can answer back. But this disadvantage is partly overcome if the minister welcomes discussion afterward.[1] There still remains the fact that some in the audience will adopt the minister's point of view uncritically. But perhaps that is a safer view to adopt in this way than one which is gained from a narrow or selfish politician. There may be religious people on both sides of the question so that in applying big truths to concrete situations the preacher hurts people who are just as conscientious as he.[2] But of course the right lies on one side or the other,[3] and the preacher is apt to have more prophetic insight into life than the majority of his hearers. Furthermore, the church must choose between being theoretical and aloof or dealing

[1] Royden, "Political Christianity," p. 3

[2] Ibid, p. 7

[3] Ibid, p. 14

with politics.[1] How can the minister keep still on the biggest problems confronting his people? We like to hear generalities and forget problems in church.[1] But surely our comfort is not the chief consideration when some big principle is at stake. The minister plays a large part in forming those attitudes and habits of thought hitherto discussed as one of the primary duties of the church. Much of this purpose may be accomplished by indirect reference and use of illustrations in sermons. The minister should certainly avoid becoming involved too deeply in a political fight. But he should not altogether refrain from holding up the ideal in contrast to the actual for the good of the social development of his parishioners. If he spoke on no debatable ground, he would not touch life very deeply.

More often and more fittingly political issues can be threshed out at an informal discussion during the week. All dogmatism and assumption of authority must be laid aside but the probable results of various lines of action can be pointed out. The attention can be drawn to the effect of the proposed measure on the whole process of the bettering of society in which the church along with political agencies is engaged. If the minister could get all professed Christian men to review political matters in the light of Christian idealism, he would be doing humanity a great service, whether they all agreed with him or not.

[1] Dr. Vaughan, class notes.

Are there more important things for the minister to be doing than studying political matters? Possibly. But he is justified in spending part of his time in such study because of the close connection between the political order and the kind of personalities which his people are enabled to develop. He will also gain a deeper insight into the meaning of life in all its relations.

Not only the minister but other leaders in the Church should be concerned about political progress. The Sunday School especially has an opportunity to teach the possibility of applying Christian principles to social and political life. As the justification of a social worker interfering in a family situation is superior skill, so justification for pronouncement by Church leaders on the right and wrong of political issues is superior spiritual insight. Young people must be definitely trained in ethical discrimination. Sunday school leaders should be careful not to dictate opinions but train the young people in ethical discrimination and in forming their own judgments on political matters. Of course a specific outlook on life will be given to the children when they are too young to question it. If a given church works out its Sunday School program definitely to raise its children to the belief that Jesus' teachings can be applied to industrial and national groups, those children will always tend to support attempts at international

understanding and attempts to make industrial democracy real. Some militarists and big business men will be worried for fear national loyalties or social stability are being undermined. But the Church with a sane program of inter-class and international understanding will really be laying a firmer foundation for national and industrial security because it will be a system allowing for progress without revolution.

Furthermore, a church's program for its young people should certainly include definite training in the technique of democratic interpenetration of mind on mind. Group discussions should be encouraged and so guided that the group will learn how to get the maximum contribution of each member and alter original assumptions in the light of all the view-points expressed, so that a cooperative opinion will be built up. Members of the group will be influenced by one another and by their chosen leaders.

Where there are no forums or non-partisan leagues, the Church should urge the formation of such and even start them if necessary. But such groups are usually more useful apart from the limitations of church sponsoring. The church should unquestionably encourage and give its approval to such organizations.

So my conclusion is that the Church should lead in discussion of vital political issues[1] unless they are so controversial as to cause hard feelings. Loss of prestige

[1] "Why the Church," p. 47

and support among the ultra-conservative business men may bring hardship but should not deter the church from doing its duty. The church's field is to minister to all classes.

Should the Church as an organized body try to influence legislation or policies of the government by passing resolutions, by getting thousands of its adherents to write to senators, by sending delegations to hearings, by planning a concerted denunciation of some present practice of the government? Should the Church make specific demands of the State? For example, Dr. Cadman says that the churches should require the political authorities of their respective nations to define and cofify international law working toward the substitution of arbitration for combat in the disputes of Christian nations.[2] Some would say that such demands were inconsistent with the principle of separation of Church and State now widely accepted. The thing that saves such action from being domination of the State by the Church is that the Church has no political power by which it can enforce its demands. It depends on persuasion and pressure of public opinion just as do the other organizations which try to influence government.

In thus maintaining that a church may pronounce on the worth of some specific measures, I am not unaware of difference of opinion on this point. Miss Scudder in "The Church and the Hour," pp. 22 and 30[3] says: "The church

[1] Cadman, "Christianity and the State," p. 332

[2] Cadman, "Christianity and the State," p. 327

[3] Quoted in "Why the Church," p. 42

should not be led astray on particular measures or theories, but should insist that her children sift theories uncompromisingly in the light of Christian idealism." Lippmann[1] goes still further in saying, "A church ceases to be a church when it enters into immediate political controversy." Many other writers hold a similar position.

But the Church can accomplish so much more as a united body that it is justified in standing for or against a particular issue if that is clearly enough a definite step forward or backward toward the bettering of society. I agree that a church cannot wisely pronounce on every little matter that comes before the voting public or try to control all political actions even in its own city. It should confine itself to influencing those strategic decisions that determine the whole course of action for years to come in the direction of a moral achievement. In this way the Church will not lay itself open to the accusation of trying to run the State and will not expend its energies in activities of secondary importance.

In calling on secular agencies to carry out a needed reform the Church should leave it to them to work out the details. It should emphasize the need and describe the ideal situation and insist that it is possible to apply the principle of brotherhood in industrial or international relations. For example, a church would make a mistake to endorse a particular program of social reconstruction

[1] Quoted in "Why the Church," p. 42

like socialism, but would be justified in calling upon employers and employees to strive for a better understanding. The church may provide the motivation for the attempt at conciliation, even in a time of crisis urging a conference of disputing groups. The church must always remember that it is serving all men, not men of any special class or race. But the Church can insist on equal rights for both sides and protest against any unfairness of procedure. The actual solution must be worked out in conference of the parties concerned. Similarly the church can denounce the use of force in international disputes and advocate the substitution of law for war. But it rests with the statesmen and jurists of the different nations to work out the actual mechanics of international federation. Churches can use the weapon of public opinion when statesmen are not really trying to bring about what is best for all. The Church can also definitely help in bringing about better relations by building up mutual understanding among individuals and peoples.

The doctrine that "the end justifies the means" has proved to be dangerous. Sound ethics demands that the Church should not use methods which are inconsistent with the ends sought. For instance, if the Church seeks to make a peaceful world, it does not seem best to go about it by the use of force.

A church must never therefore concur in the use of force or unfair methods. That is one of the main reasons why

churches should not become embroiled in the heat of a dispute and definitely take sides. Even if one side is in the right, the church cannot be party to any illegal or brutal means of making the other side yield. This applies to political campaigns and strikes and wars. Of course equally the church must refrain from using any unethical methods to further ends of its own.

The relation of a church to party politics is similar to its relation to other agencies. It should recognize it, cooperate with it in trying to better society, criticize its methods and attitudes where necessary, but never ally with it. If a church works directly with a party, the world can assume that it endorses all of its practices. A church should never form itself into a branch of a political party and get votes by loyalty or patronage and expect members to vote a straight ticket. Each issue must be worked for on its own merits. Party control of politics is not ideal, but could doubtless be improved. The church will not help matters by ignoring the parties or denouncing them in general. Christians as citizens cannot refrain[1] from joining an organization where their influence in political life may be felt. They should not, however, be satisfied that the present arrangement is final but should be looking for a more efficient way of running elections and making officials accountable to the people. In the meantime "let us expect more of our politicians."[2] A public office

[1] Royden, "Political Christianity," p. 110

[2] Ibid, p. 117, 118.

is a public trust.[1] A church must not dictate to a politician but inspire him with high motives of service.

A church cannot ignore immoral conditions in the social or political affairs of its own community. This does not mean that the local church can go in and run the city government, electing the mayor and as many other officials as possible from its own membership. On the contrary, it must recognize the contribution of good citizens wherever they can be found. The church can, however, take a stand against the bad conditions in the community and advocate a concerted attempt to bring about a change for the better and urge other agencies to cooperate with it in creating and popularizing wholesome recreational and educational centers to take the place of cheap dance halls, etc. and in convincing some responsible citizens that the respectable element would back them up in office. Then the church can reinforce its own program of promoting and refining community spirit and sense of obligation for the moral standards and civil administration of the community.

D. Conducting Investigations

The last way in which a church can influence politics without unduly dictating definite policies is in gathering and disseminating information[2] and conducting impartial investigations.

A church should encourage a Christian method of

[1] Copec, No. 3

[2] "Why the Church," p. 44

cooperation and scientific research on the progress of Christianity and all movements which are liable to contribute to or hinder the perfecting of society. This of course includes appreciative reports of work done by missions and other agencies which are promoting understanding among people and spreading the gospel of love and peace.

A complete program of investigation of social and political progress necessarily includes inquiry into some of the conditions which are not so clearly helpful. For instance, industrial conditions are strained and not organized around the principle of mutual service and consideration. Should there ever be an investigation of a strike under church auspices? There is heated disagreement on this point. Some think the economic system is outside the Church's province and that the Church therefore cannot know enough about its problems to pass judgment on its methods and results. But what is to prevent the Church from enlisting or hiring experts who do have the training to follow big industrial movements in all their implications? We must admit that ministers do not in general have time, ability, or facilities for conducting a reliable inquiry and that there are other agencies which have already at hand trained workers and adequate physical equipment. Other agencies may be fitted to do some parts of the work better but the Church makes a unique contribution in Christian

interpretation and in its impartial attitude at the beginning. A single church may not be able to finance and conduct a respectable investigation for social facts but it can help support and cooperate with federated efforts under Christian leadership.

In the case of secular investigation also it can give out the results of such research. Can the Church recommend political action on the basis of such research in the light of Christ's teachings? It can much better have an opinion after research than without it. But as I have stated above, the Church will accomplish more by standing for square methods on both sides of a controversy and publishing evil practices so as to formulate public opinion than it will by definitely taking sides. If all the local churches lay out before their members and friends the facts and show their discrepancy from the Christian ideal, Christian citizens will know how to vote in the event of that necessity without being told that all of one class are good and all of another class are wicked. Church people must not forget that the Church is interested in serving all classes as individuals and as members of society and to help make relations between individuals and classes and races and nations more mutually helpful. If investigations can help bring this about, then by all means let us help in and make use of investigations. Let us of course insist that they be honest and well done.

The Church has another advantage over specialized

agencies in its approach to studying political-social problems; and that is its consecrated attitude. The Church is dedicated to serving humanity by spreading the Christian spirit. Being actuated by this high motive, the Church is theoretically willing to sacrifice its own prestige and convenience in the interests of justice and mercy.

There is a power in real religion that can break down even hot passions and bitter prejudices. Men of different classes worshipping together find a common bond otherwise unsuspected. This is the actual working of the constructive principle of vital love which the Church wishes to have permeate society. Conferences between strike leaders and employers have been productive of really satisfactory adjustments when the spirit of Christ has dominated. In industrial conflict understanding is the only alternative to revolution. So the Church must demand that the former prevail.

E. Concentrating on its Unique Function

There are really two limits to the extent of the Church's participation in politics. One is the danger of becoming dogmatic and dictating to the state specific programs so as to upset the balance between church and state and usurp undue power for the church as an organization.

The other danger is that the church will become so absorbed with inquiring into political problems that it cannot perform its larger and more distinctive function of

quickening the religious consciousness of the people it touches. The church's chief function is the promotion of the Christian Way of Life.[1] A church's unique function must be preserved; strengthening man's ultimate purposes and reaffirming the deepest values of life.[2] The church's fundamental function of religious motivation is likely to suffer when it is cumbered with the doing of many things.[3] The renewal of social values is much more important than legislation. Beautiful worship, inspirational sermons and other means of strengthening the consciousness of God's presence should not be neglected for institutional activities. However, an awareness of political problems and a striving after a solution should permeate the service of the church, for is this not a religious question: How are men who are sons of God to live together in one human brotherhood.[4] Men must live together and serve each other.[5]

So the Church must put first things first and seek to minister to the souls of men. Its interference in political life is only an attempt to make society fit for individuals to develop Christian character in.

F. Conducting a Model Christian Institution

As long as the Church is particularly trying to prove that Christ's teachings are applicable to the relations

1 "Why the Church," p. 103-104

2 Abbott, "Rights of Man," p. 360

3 "Why the Church," p. 77

4 Abbott, "Rights of Man," pp. 359, 369.

5 Copec, No. 3

of men in groups as well as to single individuals, it behooves it to demonstrate the truth of its conviction by having its own organization based on mutual understanding and consideration. Before the Church can convince the world of the practicability of brotherhood in the political world, it must convince its own adherents of its practicability within the Church. Local churches must be progressing toward a truer type of democracy, must be alive to their obligations, must be motivated in all their relations by the spirit of Christ, welcoming the lowly and out-cast as well as the aristocratic. They must beware of unchristian rivalry and become vital links in the great chain of interdenominational and international unity.[1]

[1] Faunce and Ellwood

CHAPTER IV

TRUE CHRISTIANITY AND TRUE POLITICS NOT ENTIRELY DISTINCT

A. Common Ideals

Democracy and Christianity have many ideals in common. Christ emphasized the equal worth of all persons in the eyes of God the Father. He saw the value of the normal development of human personality and was a master at bringing out latent traits. Recently democratic leaders are coming to see that the masses of the people have value as individual personalities and amount to more if given chances for full development. The center of Christ's teaching was the brotherhood of man because of the Fatherhood of God. He gave as the second most important commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Since the days of the French Revolution fraternity has been part of the motto of democratic movements. Liberty for the individual and the minority is implicit in Jesus' teaching and has been the key-note of the modern church. Is not liberty also the key-note of modern experiments in democracy? There is also a striking unanimity in the appeal of Christianity and of democracy to service as the watchword of life. The Church and society are built on the mutual consecration of men to the general welfare. "Modern democracy is essentially a movement to realize the ideals of social religion; all genuine social religion is necessarily a religion of democracy."[1]

[1] Ellwood, "Reconstruction of Religion," p. 249.

B. Aims Overlapping

The Church and political agencies have similar aims. Politics attempts to work out the practical details of organized community and national life so that people can get along together the best they can. The church is interested in building up the best possible society to be an environment for people trying to develop Christian character. So they can work together in trying to better society. "One of religion's first tasks should be to secure a political organization that will make possible normal life characterized by good-will, cooperation, peace, and security."[1]

Both democracy and religion in America are striving to make a better society for people to grow in. They are working together for a common purpose. Democracy finds a natural ally in social religion according to Ellwood.[1] Also social religion should be allied with democracy.[2] They are curiously interdependent and strengthen one another. An experiment in democracy is an experiment in sonship of a common God, brotherhood.[3] "Whether a people diverse in race, religion, and industry can live happily and prosperously together with no other authority over them than the unarmed authority of conscience, is the question which America has to solve for the world."[4]

Of course the Church must help to answer this question as it is certainly a religious question.[5]

1 Ellwood, "Reconstruction of Religion," p. 249

3 Ellwood, p. 244

2 Ellwood, p. 250

4 Abbott, p. 369

5 Abbott, p. 360

6 Ellwood

C. Interdependence[1]

The Church in trying to build up Christian character in individuals is dependent on the type of environment which includes it. A democratic society based on real consideration for every person and with every person constantly participating to make the social order more flexible to express the will of the people would allow for the rapid and glorious growth of Christ-like thousands. On the other hand, the State in trying to establish and maintain a form of society where people can live together in peace and harmony with opportunity for the fullest development of all is dependent on a social religion efficiently propagated. The successful achievement of democracy in the U. S. can only be brought about in co-operation with the Church. The Church builds up in individuals and groups good-will, understanding, and service instead of the fear, force, and self-interest which now prevail in society.

[1] Idea from Ellwood

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

It is my considered opinion that the Church has a right to interfere in the State's business when by such interference it is serving the State by increasing the moral worth of its institutions and showing the possibility of governing the relations of human beings in a practical way by the law of love and brotherhood. The experiment of democracy is furthered by the Church's influence in politics. The Church gains a vitality and real connection with life. The individual has a more normal development of his personality in a more perfect balance of his religious and secular life. As the Church progressively accomplishes its purpose of perfecting society, each individual will be enabled to develop more fully on account of his environment.

The Church can make its influence felt on political life by preaching its peculiar ideals to all listeners and exercising its special insight into the moral and spiritual values of life. Further, the Church can motivate individuals so that they will discharge the duties and privileges of citizenship as distinctly Christian citizens and build up right attitudes on social problems. The church can even voice its position on a political issue where it is not too controversial. This is done by the preacher and the teachers in the Sunday School and by religious papers and programs of state and national federations. Churches can be especially

helpful by participating in the conduct and interpretation of investigations. It is best not to dictate details but to color an outlook on life with the social gospel. Through all this activity the Church must bear in mind that its chief function is to make the community conscious of God and must not be led astray on relatively less important activities.

The Church could be more effective in its impact on American life and could improve the political system more rapidly if it were united in its purposes and organization. Less energy and money would be wasted in foolish competition and more unity of program and conviction would be possible. It could then speak with a more concerted voice and systematize passing the prophetic vision from the more forward-looking leaders down through the denominational headquarters to the ministers and laymen of the local church who touch the masses of the people most closely. In growing international unity the Church would incalculably further the growth of international understanding among nations.

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